

VZCZCXRO0117
PP RUEHFK
DE RUEHKO #1206 0660528
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 070528Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9443
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA// PRIORITY
RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4988
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 8103
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0983
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0913
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS TOKYO 001206

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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IRANS NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT -
TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Top stories this morning include the
e
decision made Monday by the Japanese government to delay
the planned withdrawal of its ground troops from the
southern Iraqi city of Samawah.

1. "Too Early to Give Up on Iran" The liberal Asahi
editorialized (3/7): "The board of governors of the
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) began its
meeting yesterday at a time when the international
community has failed to convince Iran to halt its nuclear
development. The board agreed last month to refer the
issue to the more powerful UN Security Council in order
to stop Tehran from enriching uranium.... President Bush
has recognized India, a country that is not a signatory
to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as a
nuclear weapons state. So why does it reject Iran's
demand that it be allowed the peaceful use of nuclear
energy within the NPT framework? The international
community must be confused with and angry at this clear
double standard. The US claims that India and Iran are
different. In India, democracy has taken root, and there
is a stringent system preventing the outflow of nuclear
technology. India is indeed different from Iran, but it
is uncertain whether this explanation will resonate with
the international community. The US bears a heavy
responsibility in this regard.

2. "The international community, including Japan, needs
to draw on its wisdom to rebuild the fraying
nonproliferation framework, and the standoff with Iran
will be a cornerstone for this effort. The world should
remain calm, not give up, and continue to tenaciously
work on Tehran in hopes of finding a compromise.

Fortunately, Iran's negotiations with Russia and the EU three have not completely collapsed.... The ultimate goal is to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear arms.... The IAEA needs to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions while keeping the country in the NPT regime.... Bugged down in Iraq, the US must be hoping to avoid further aggravating the situation in the Middle East by isolating Iran."

SCHIEFFER